PUBLIC OPINION

IN SAUDI ARABIA
ABOUT THE UNITED NATIONS

The United Nations Department of Public Information commissioned a public opinion poll in Saudi Arabia to assess the awareness, knowledge and image of the United Nations. The poll was conducted during February and March 1992.

■ THE RESULTS IN BRIEF

- International peace and security, human rights and children's issues are of greatest interest to Saudi Arabians.

- Television, newspapers and radio are the main sources from which Saudi Arabians receive information about the United Nations.

UN PERFORMANCE RATING

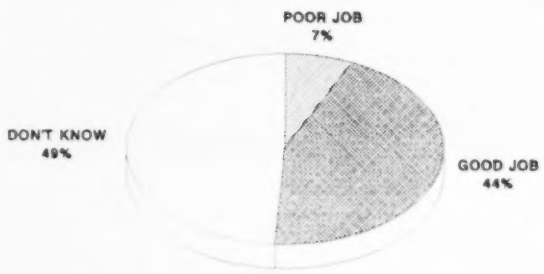

FIGURE I

RATING UN PERFORMANCE

Forty-four per cent of Saudi Arabians say the United Nations is doing a good job compared to seven per cent who rate its performance as poor. About one half of those polled do not assess the Organization's performance.

Sixty-five per cent of the managerial/professional group positively rate the UN's performance compared to 11 per cent of those who work in the area of farm/trade. The same holds true with university educated respondents (72 per cent) compared to respondents without a formal education (18 per cent).

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INTEREST IN UNITED NATIONS ISSUES

	VERY INTERESTED %	SOMEWHAT INTERESTED %	NOT INTERESTED %
INT'L PEACE AND SECURITY	45	20	35
HUMAN RIGHTS	42	23	34
CHILDREN'S ISSUES	34	28	38
CRIME PREVENTION	31	26	44
DRUG ABUSE	29	29	42
DISARMAMENT	27	26	46
REFUGEES & DISASTER RELIEF	27	26	47
WORLD FOOD PROBLEMS	26	28	46
EQUAL RIGHTS FOR WOMEN	23	30	47
AIDS	20	25	54
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION	19	27	54
IMPROVING HOUSING CONDITIONS	19	26	56
POPULATION ISSUES	18	25	56
RACIAL DISCRIMINATION	17	32	50
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	16	30	54
TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT	16	31	53
THE WORK OF THE UN IN GENERAL	12	34	54
NEW WORLD INFORMATION ORDER	11	22	67
DECOLONIZATION	9	27	64
INT'L LAW & TREATIES	8	28	65
INT'L DEBT CRISIS	7	20	72
APARTHEID IN SOUTH AFRICA	6	18	75
AFRICAN ECONOMIC RECOVERY	4	16	79

(NB: SOME RESPONDENTS INDICATED "DON'T KNOW" OR GAVE NO ANSWER TO SOME OF THE ISSUES)

FIGURE 2

AWARENESS OF THE UNITED NATIONS

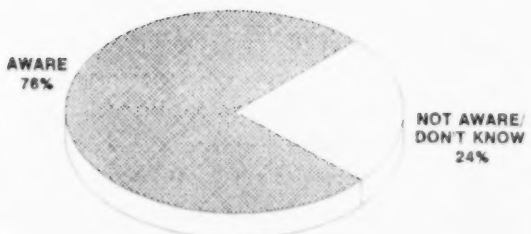

FIGURE 3

REASONS FOR UN PERFORMANCE RATING

A majority of those who positively rate the United Nations' performance, cite its efforts in halting wars, as well as its work with disadvantaged people. Other reasons cited include programmes for children and the protection the UN gives to small nations under occupation.

Of the seven per cent who say the United Nations performs poorly, among the beliefs mentioned are that resolutions are biased and are influenced by the big powers and the UN fails to give adequate assistance to the poor in times of crisis. In addition, they say the UN neglects issues related to the Arab world.

INTEREST IN UNITED NATIONS ISSUES

International peace and security, human rights, children's issues, crime prevention and drug abuse are among the UN activities in which Saudi Arabians are most interested. Twice as many females than males are interested in receiving information on equal rights issues. Women also show more interest in UN issues related to children's programmes. There was little interest expressed in regard to any other issues before the United Nations.

AWARENESS AND KNOWLEDGE OF THE UN

Awareness of the organization is high among Saudi Arabians. Seventy-six per cent of thosed polled say they have heard of the United Nations. The level of education makes a difference in whether or not those surveyed are aware of the UN. For example, of those respondents with at least a secondary education, 97 per cent are aware of the UN compared to 45 per cent of those who have an elementary education or less.

In terms of occupation, awareness levels are highest among those who work in the managerial/ professional area. One hundred per cent of the respondents in this category are aware of the UN compared to 50 per cent who work in the farm/trade field.

Thirty-five per cent of those surveyed are able to name at least one United Nations agency, body or institution. Together with the Security Council, UNICEF, UNESCO, UNRWA, and WHO are the agencies most frequently mentioned.

Education and occupation are strongly related to the ability to name a United Nation's agency, body or institution. Eighty-eight per cent of the respondents with a university education and of those who are managers and/or professionals can name more than one agency, body or institution compared to six per cent of those without a formal education.

IDENTIFICATION OF THE UN SECRETARY-GENERAL

Forty-four per cent of those surveyed identified from a list of six names, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali as the current Secretary-General.

The respondents' ability to name the Secretary-General is related to their level of education. Ninety per cent of those with a university education could name the Secretary-General, while only eight per cent of those without a formal education were able to do so.

ABILITY TO NAME A UN INSTITUTION

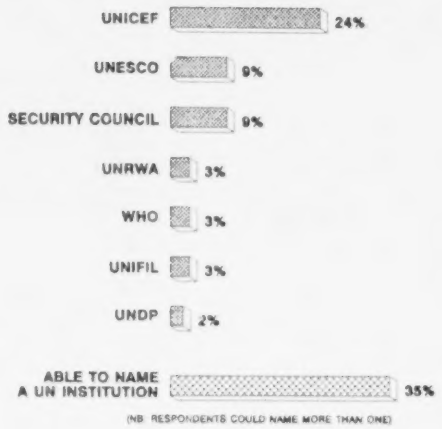

FIGURE 4

IDENTIFYING THE UN SECRETARY-GENERAL

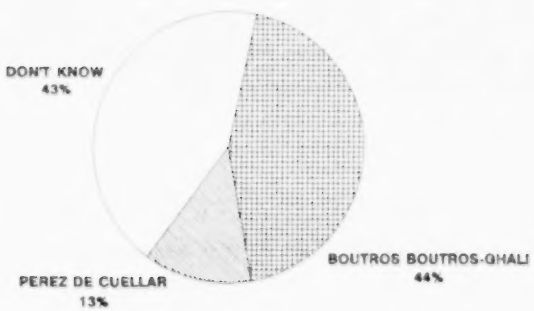

FIGURE 5

SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON THE UN

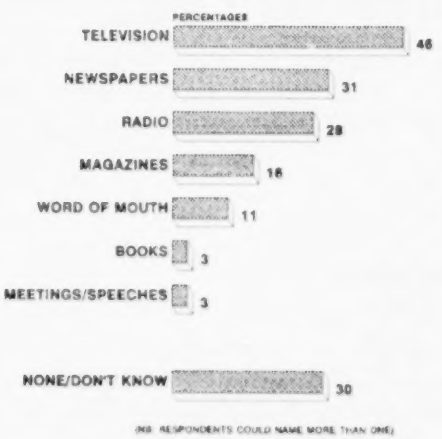

FIGURE 6

TEACHING ABOUT THE UNITED NATIONS

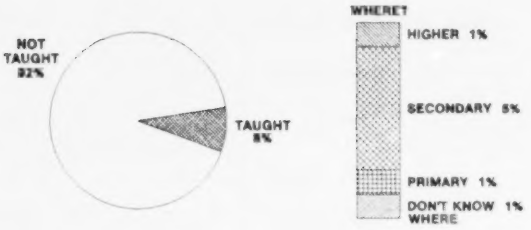

FIGURE 7

HOW THE POLL WAS DONE

The Market Research Organization (MRO) based in Amman, Jordan, conducted a survey using a quota sample of 1004 adult men and women in urban Saudi Arabia. The interviews were conducted during February and March 1992 face-to-face with respondents. The margin of sampling error is estimated at ± 3 per cent.

The Programme Evaluation and Communications Research Unit of the United Nations Department of Public Information undertakes public opinion polls to "analyse trends of public opinion throughout the world about the activities of the United Nations and the extent to which an informed understanding of the work of the UN is being secured". General Assembly resolution 13(1), paragraph 13, Annex 1 of 13 February 1946.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Nearly half of those polled receive their information about the United Nations from television (46 per cent), followed by newspapers (31 per cent) and radio (28 per cent). The use of these sources increases as levels of education increase. For instance, among those polled with an intermediate education, 49 per cent use television, 24 per cent radio and 17 per cent newspapers, while among those with a university education 65 per cent use television, 83 per cent newspapers and 67 per cent radio.

Eight per cent of Saudi Arabians say they were taught about the United Nations at school. Of that number, more than half say they were taught at the secondary level.

International peace and security, human rights and programmes for children are the UN issues in which Saudi Arabians are interested in receiving information.

Television is the primary source from which those polled receive information about the United Nations, followed by newspapers and radio. In general, the use of these sources for information about the UN increases with higher levels of education. People with a university education use newspapers more than any other source of information about the UN.

CONCLUSION

The United Nations is known to more than three fourths of the Saudi Arabian population. About half of those surveyed say the UN is doing a good job. Almost half of those polled did not evaluate the UN's performance.

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